

# THE INDIANA DEPT. OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS UPDATE



Mitch Daniels - Governor  
Tom Applegate - Director

August 2011

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Edition 2011-3

## **IDVA UPDATE CHANGES FORMAT - AGAIN**

In an effort to reduce the time required to put together this State newsletter for County Veterans' Service Officers, we are following an example set by the Army Echoes and the INVSOA Eagle. This and future editions of the IDVA Update will be in this simpler format. The time required to put together a three-column just product complete with pictures was just too much, so we are going to this no-frills style. As usual we welcome your comments and suggestions.

## **CONFERENCE DATE FOR 2012 ANNOUNCED BY IDVA**

Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Director Tom Applegate, announced that the INVSO Conference for 2012 will be held at the Marriott Inn-East next year on July 10-12, 2012. The conference was moved from June to July to better accommodate the end of the state budget year.

## **PARKING AT THE RICHARD L. HOUDERSCHOVA MEDICAL CENTER IN INDIANAPOLIS**

Tired of trying to find a parking spot? New parking options are now available. Consider parking and riding a free shuttle from one of these offsite locations:

- 2333 Lafayette Road, Indianapolis
- 2669 Cold Springs Road, Indianapolis
- 3912 Minnesota Street (north side of street near Stout Field)

Indianapolis shuttles are handicap accessible and offsite parking offers convenience for you. As the hospital works through this, their goal is to ensure great care for YOU, the Hoosier Heroes, and they will do their best to communicate with you. They ask that veterans be patient as they work through this trying time...they are beginning the journey to improve their parking situation. For more information and for a parking map, go to their web site at <http://www.indianapolis.va.gov/visitors/parking.asp>.

## **POSITIONS OPEN AT ST. VINCENT HEALTH**

The following is taken, with permission, from the St. Vincent web site.

St. Vincent Health is one of the largest employers in the state of Indiana with more than 13,000 associates, meaning whatever your specialization and whatever your professional goals the sky is the limit.

St. Vincent Health has been serving the health care needs of Indiana residents for more than 126 years. Our health ministry consists of 20 facilities, with a direct presence in 46 Indiana counties. The system is comprised of one

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quaternary facility, three tertiary hospitals, six critical access hospitals, six specialty hospitals, several joint venture partners and clinical affiliates.

A philosophy of strong partnerships with businesses, communities, physicians, associates and others is regarded by St. Vincent Health as essential to improving the health status of Hoosiers.

As advocates for a healthier society, we have developed strong partnerships with communities and individuals who share compatible values. We believe that health care should be kept local, which is why we have extended our reach beyond urban areas such as Indianapolis, Kokomo, and Anderson, and into rural communities where health services are often scarce.

Please visit our web site to search and apply for opportunities of interest at [www.stvincent.org/jobs](http://www.stvincent.org/jobs). St. Vincent Health is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## ARMY COMMEMORATIVE COINS AID NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

From the National Museum of the United States Army News Release

The United States Mint's 2011 Army Commemorative Coins—a \$5 gold coin, a silver dollar, and a copper-clad half dollar—are the first and only coins in American history to afford unique public recognition of the United States Army and the service and sacrifice of American Soldiers, past and present. The themes of the coins are “Army Service in War” (gold), “Modern Army Service” (silver) and “Service in Peace” (copper-clad). Symbolically, the design of each distinct coin celebrates the storied history and traditions of the US Army from the colonial period to the present. The commemoratives will be available during the remainder of calendar year 2011 only. The coins are a prestigious form of public recognition of all Soldiers, past and present, and they will help cultivate an appreciation for Army history and Army values on a national scale. In addition, part of the proceeds from the Mint's sale of the coins goes to the Army Historical Foundation to help build the National Museum of the United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. By law, the Foundation will receive \$35, \$10, and \$5, respectively, for each gold, silver, and copper-clad coin sold. For more information on the coins, visit [www.usmint.gov/catalog](http://www.usmint.gov/catalog). For more information on the National Museum of the United States Army, visit [www.armyhistory.org](http://www.armyhistory.org).

## DOD ISSUES PURPLE HEART STANDARDS FOR BRAIN INJURY

Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 28, 2011 – U.S. service members have long been eligible to receive the Purple Heart Medal for the signature wounds of the current wars — mild traumatic brain injuries and concussions — but now there is more clarity on how medical criteria for the award are applied, Defense Department officials said yesterday.

The criteria for the Purple Heart award state that the injury must have been caused by enemy action or in action against the enemy and has to be of a degree requiring treatment by a medical officer.

But it may be difficult to determine when a mild traumatic brain injury or a concussive injury that does not

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result in a loss of consciousness is severe enough to require treatment by a medical officer. "This is why we created this baseline standard," DOD spokeswoman Eileen Lainez said.

DOD allows the award of the Purple Heart even if a service member was not treated by a medical officer, as long as a medical officer certifies that the injury would have required treatment by a medical officer had one been available.

DOD officials said that as the science of traumatic brain injuries becomes better understood, guidance for award of the medal will evolve.

"The services are not able to speculate as to how many service members may have received a mild TBI or concussion but did not seek or receive medical treatment," Lainez said. "Therefore, each military department will establish its retroactive review procedures in the near future to ensure deserving service members are appropriately recognized." Retroactive reviews would cover injuries suffered since Sept. 11, 2001, she added. The Marine Corps has issued clarifying guidance to ensure commanders in the field understand when the Purple Heart is appropriate for concussions.

Army officials are preparing to issue their guidance and ask soldiers to wait until submission requirements are published through command channels and on the Human Resources Command website at <http://www.hrc.army.mil> before submitting or resubmitting nominations for the Purple Heart Medal for concussion injuries.

Once the Army publishes its requirements, officials said, soldiers should resubmit requests through their chains of command.

Army veterans should resubmit to the U.S. Army Human Resources Command at: Commander, USA HRC, ATTN: Awards and Decorations Branch (AHRC-PDP-A), 1600 Spearhead Division Ave., Fort Knox, KY 40122. Vets also can call 1-888-276-9472 or email [hrc.tagd.awards@conus.army.mil](mailto:hrc.tagd.awards@conus.army.mil).

## ARMY BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS (ABCMR) AND THE ARMY DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARD (ADRB) CHANGE ADDRESS

The Army Review Boards Agency (ARBA) office at St. Louis has been closed in conjunction with Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Applications to the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR), **DD Form 149**; and the Army Discharge Review Board (ADRB), **DD Form 293**, must now be mailed to **1901 S. Bell St., Arlington, VA 22202-4508**. The current editions of these applications also provide this mailing address. The current applications can be printed from the ARBA web site -

<http://arba.army.pentagon.mil> The forms are in a fillable format so that applicants can word process on the forms and print them.

The ARBA web site provides the information, forms, application guides, answers to common questions, and links to many other helpful web sites. The ARBA web site also provides an online process for application to the ABCMR and the ADRB that can be used instead of completing and mailing the hard copy applications. The Army encourage use of the online application process.

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## IVY TECH FREEZES TUITION FOR VETERANS, GUARD MEMBERS

Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC) officials announced this month they will freeze tuition for Hoosier veterans eligible for the GI Bill and Indiana National Guard members.

Tuition will remain at its current per credit hour rate of \$104.55 for these military groups for two years, rather than increasing to \$107.80 per credit hour in 2011-2012 and \$111.15 per credit hour in 2012-13.

Although these yearly tuition increases are the lowest amongst the state's public colleges and universities, ITCC is committed to keeping its tuition even lower for eligible veterans and armed forces.

"We appreciate and admire Ivy Tech's commitment to education for veterans. Many of those veterans are serving in the National Guard today," said Maj. Gen R. Martin Umbarger, the adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard. "Civilian education makes us a stronger military force, while providing our community with a stronger work force."

Ivy Tech serves more veterans than any other college in the state. Currently, the college enrolls 4,381 veterans, with 2,791 receiving educational benefits. Of the total number of veterans, 72 percent are males and 28 percent are females. A majority of the veterans are between 30-39 years of age.

"As a state college, we are committed to making higher education accessible to our service men and women," said Ivy Tech President Thomas J. Snyder. "These Hoosier heroes have sacrificed for our nation and we want to show our appreciation for their commitment by removing financial barriers."

Ivy Tech is committed to seeing veterans succeed with a special support staff and a statewide director, specifically tasked with expanding opportunities for former and current service members. Ivy Tech's Veterans Affairs Office serves as a liaison between students who are veterans, their dependents and the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. The Ivy Tech office assists students with veteran status and dependents of service members who are disabled or deceased. With 14 offices available to assist statewide, the team also oversees educational benefits and financial aid for veterans.

For more information, please visit [www.ivytech.edu/veterans-affairs](http://www.ivytech.edu/veterans-affairs).

ITCC is the state's largest public postsecondary institution and the nation's largest singly accredited statewide community college system serving nearly 200,000 students annually. Ivy Tech has campuses throughout Indiana. It serves as the state's engine of workforce development, offering affordable degree programs and training that are aligned with the needs of its community along with courses and programs that transfer to other colleges and universities in Indiana. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association.

Ivy Tech officials added that the tuition freezes will apply to state employees as well.



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## VA CREATES WOMEN VETERANS' CALL CENTER *Major Outreach Effort Launched*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has embarked on a major initiative to reach out to women veterans in order to solicit their input on ways to enhance the health care services VA provides to women veterans.

“We are taking a proactive approach to enhancing VA health care for women Veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We are seeking the input of women Veterans so that VA can continue to provide high quality health care to the growing numbers of women Veterans.”

Representatives at VA’s Health Resource Center (HRC) are placing calls to women Veterans nationwide, asking them to share their experiences with VA and suggest potential enhancements that will further VA’s mission to provide the best care anywhere.

Women Veterans are one of the fastest growing segments of the Veteran population. Of the 22.7 million living Veterans, more than 1.8 million are women. They comprise nearly 8 percent of the total Veteran population and 6 percent of all Veterans who use VA health care services.

VA estimates by 2020 women Veterans will constitute 10 percent of the Veteran population and 9.5 percent of VA patients. The HRC, which started placing calls on June 1, is contacting women Veterans who have enrolled, but have not begun using VA services.

“Through this contact center, we are placing friendly, conversational calls to women Veterans,” said Patricia Hayes, chief consultant of the VA’s Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group. “We want these Veterans and their caregivers to talk candidly about why they are not using VA, whether they are aware of the gender-specific services we offer, and what additional services they would like to see VA offer.”

The HRC representatives making the calls are also informing women Veterans about the services VA offers and quickly connecting them with appropriate departments if they are interested in trying VA health care. Veterans who have complaints about VA are connected to a patient advocate who helps resolve issues.

VA has trained professionals in all aspects of women’s health, including general primary care, osteoporosis management, heart disease, mental health care, menopausal services and obesity-related issues, such as diabetes. Preventive screenings for breast and cervical cancer are also areas in which VA excels. Soon, all VA facilities will offer comprehensive primary care for women from a single provider.

The Women Veterans Health Care program has made significant changes in the last few years to enhance the health care offered to eligible women Veterans. This progress includes:

- Adopting key policies to improve access and enhance services for women Veterans;
- Implementing comprehensive primary care for women Veterans;
- Conducting cutting-edge research on the effects of military service on women’s lives;
- Improving communication and outreach to women Veterans; and
- Providing mental health, homelessness and other services designed to meet the unique needs of women Veterans

For more information about VA programs and services for women Veterans, please visit:  
[www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) and [www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth).

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## OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM and OPERATION NEW DAWN MEMORIAL WALL

Indiana has sustained the following casualties since the last IDVA Update:



United States Navy Hospitalman **Benjamin D. Rast**, 23, of Niles, Michigan (father, South Bend, Indiana).

Died April 6, 2011 northeast of Patrol Base Alcatraz, Helmand province, Afghanistan, while conducting a dismounted patrol.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve; stationed at Naval Medical Center, Expeditionary Medical Force Detachment, San Diego.

Ben was a 2006 graduate of Brandywine High School. After graduating high school, he went on to study at Lake Michigan College. He majored in law enforcement and was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society. He joined the Navy and was first stationed in California. Then he volunteered to go to Afghanistan.



Indiana Army National Guard Specialist **Scott D. Smith**, 36, of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Died June 17, 2011, in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to the 81st Troop Command, Army National Guard, Indianapolis, Indiana.



United States Army Private First Class **Joshua L. Jetton**, 21, formerly of Mooresville, Indiana. Died June 20, 2011 of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked his unit with small-arms fire in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

Assigned to 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

He graduated from Mooresville High School in 2008 and moved to Florida. He joined the Army in August, 2010.



United States Army Private First Class **James A. Waters**, 21, Cloverdale, Indiana.

Died Friday, July 1, 2011 at Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents reportedly attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division based at Fort Drum, N.Y.

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Waters joined the Army in September 2009. After training at Fort Benning, Ga., he went to Fort Drum in January 2010. He deployed with his unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in March 2011. His awards and decorations include the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He graduated from Johnson County's Whiteland High School in 2008, after which the family soon moved to the Cloverdale area.



Oklahoma Army National Guard Specialist **Augustus "Augy" J. Vacari**, 22, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and formerly from Lowell, Indiana.

He died Friday, July 29, 2011 in Paktia Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, when his dismounted patrol encountered an improvised explosive device.

He was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Army National Guard, Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

He was a 2008 graduate of Lowell High School and joined the Oklahoma National Guard about two years ago. He deployed to Afghanistan in June of 2011.

Note: The newest **Indiana Honor Roll** CD containing all Indiana 182 casualties is available. Contact [tapplegate@dva.in.gov](mailto:tapplegate@dva.in.gov) for a copy. We have also prepared a separate **Indiana National Guard Honor Roll** CD containing only the 19 Indiana National Guard casualties. Please specify which CD you would prefer.

## REVISED SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE REMISSION OF FEES PROGRAM BROUGHT ABOUT BY SB 577

This is a notice that NONE of the provisions of Senate Bill 577 affect the children of veterans who entered the military prior to 30 June 2011. Information previously published in print (including this publication), on any web site, or transmitted verbally, which indicated that those children would come under the provisions of SB 577 effective on 1 July 2011 or 1 July 2012 or any other date, is hereby withdrawn. The provisions of SB 577 pertaining to the children of disabled veterans apply ONLY to the children of veterans who initially enter the military after 30 June 2011, therefore, no "grace" period is required for the implementation of SB577.

Indiana lawmakers essentially kept the promise made by lawmakers decades ago, that the children of disabled wartime-era Hoosier veterans would receive a tuition-free education at state supported colleges and universities.

The new law, which affects the children of wartime-era veterans who initially enter the military after 30 June 2011, specifies a different set of eligibility guidelines. These are the ones outlined in Senate Bill 577, and what it boils down to is that the amount of the fee remission is determined by the severity of the veteran's service-connected disabilities. This actually makes the benefit more in line with similar benefits offered by other states. A brief breakdown of the new rules follows.

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The children of disabled wartime-era veterans who initially enter the military *after* 30 June 2011:

1. Will be limited to undergraduate courses only.
2. Will have a total of eight (8) years in the program.
3. Must not have reached their 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday at the time of their initial application.
4. The disabled wartime-era parent must have joined the service from Indiana or must have resided in Indiana at least five (5) years before the application.
5. Applicants who are not biological children of the veteran must have been adopted by the veteran parent before they were eighteen (18) years of age.
6. Must maintain the following grade point average (GPA):

Freshman academic year: a cumulative GPA that the eligible institution determines satisfactory academic progress;  
Sophomore academic year: a cumulative GPA of 2.25 on a 4.0 grading scale, or its equivalent as established by the institution.

Junior or senior academic year: a cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 grading scale, or its equivalent as established by the institution.

Students not reaching these goals will be placed on probation and must reach the requisite GPA by the next semester or its equivalent.

7. Will have their remission of fees prorated based on the VA disability rating as follows:

Children of veterans rated 80% service-connected disabled or higher by the VA will receive 100% fee remission.

Children of veterans rated less than 80% service-connected disabled will receive 20% fee remission plus the disability rating of the veteran.

If the disability rating of the veteran changes after the beginning of the academic semester, quarter or other period, the change in the disability rating shall be applied beginning with the immediately following academic semester, quarter or other period.

**Clarification: Children of veterans who entered the military before June 30, 2011 are unaffected by these changes.**



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## VETERAN STATUS ON DRIVERS LICENSE

Legislation passed this last legislative session included a bill which allows the License Branches to place the words "Military Veteran" on the back of the drivers license if the veteran wishes it. The effective date is 1 July 2011, but the BMV will not be ready to provide that service so quickly. CVSOs should inform their veterans that the License Branches will be able to provide that service starting in January of 2012.

## MILITARY MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES NOW NEED JUST ONE PHONE NUMBER FOR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

**WASHINGTON, Monday, May 23, 2011** — As part of an ongoing effort to better serve the military community, the American Red Cross today announced that it will move to a single telephone number for its emergency communication services.

Beginning June 13, 2011, at 8:00 a.m. EDT, all military members and their families can use one number- 877-272-7337 (U.S. Toll Free) to send an urgent message to a service member.

The change means that all military members and their families can use this single number to initiate an emergency communication, regardless of where they live. In the past, community-based military or families living outside an installation needed to remember the phone number for their local Red Cross chapters for emergency communications, while those living on a military installation used the 877-272-7337 number.

"An emergency situation can be a very stressful time for a military family, and having just one common telephone number to remember can make a difficult situation a little easier," said Sherri Brown, Senior Vice President for Service to the Armed Forces. "U.S. military personnel and their families can remain confident that the Red Cross will be there to keep them connected when there is a crisis at home."

A call to 877-272-7337 allows Red Cross emergency communications services to put military personnel in touch with their families following the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, the birth of a service member's child or grandchild or when a family faces other emergencies. Additional Red Cross services such as case management and emergency financial assistance also are available. For those stationed overseas, the three options for calling will remain the same: calling 877-272-7337 direct, accessing the number through a military operator, or calling the local Red Cross station.

"The Red Cross has always been there for us," said Mr. Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy. "It's critically important to our men and women serving away from home that their families know whom to call in the event of an emergency. The Red Cross is now making it even easier to make that call."

The Red Cross "Service to the Armed Forces" program provides assistance to more than 2 million service members and many of the nation's 24 million veterans. The Red Cross provides emergency communications linking service members with their families during time of crisis; comfort and care in military and veterans medical facilities; access to financial assistance in partnership with the military aid societies; information and referral and assistance to veterans.



National Headquarters  
2025 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## CONFERENCE UPDATES

The **Hoosier Women Veterans' Conference** held on April 16th at AMVETS Post 99, Indianapolis, may have been the best conference yet. Interim Women Veterans' Coordinator, Summer Tacy, filling in for Ashley Roberts, did an excellent job lining up and scheduling the vendors and speakers, as well as acting as the Master of Ceremonies. The HWV Committee members were active and assisted greatly. Thanks to everyone who helped, especially the Young Marines, who were anywhere they were needed, sometimes before you even knew they were needed.

The **Annual IDVA Conference** for CVSOs, held June 7-9 at the Marriott Inn - East, Indianapolis,, was back to the three-day format and was one of the most informative conferences in a long time. Experts from the VA, including the Milwaukee Pension Maintenance Center (PMC) filled the CVSOs in on all the sought for information, and the accredited Veterans' Service Officers from the VA Regional Office were excellent as usual. INVSOA President, Bruce Stanton, lined up a great team of CVSOs for some great peer training. Special thanks goes to Diana Lynch from Hamilton County for putting up with that idiot during her skit (just kidding, CVSO Wayne Long). Thanks to Alan Burnham for taking care of the Hospitality Room for us, and to Ray Baker for organizing the Jon Brinkley Memorial Golf Outing.

**The IDVA Update** is a periodic publication of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs and is provided primarily to inform County Veterans' Service Officers (CVSOs) of changes and events affecting Hoosier veterans. Comments and suggestions are welcome via [IDVA@dva.in.gov](mailto:IDVA@dva.in.gov).